



ZdK

Zentralkomitee
der deutschen Katholiken

Resolution

**For a cooperation in
partnership of women
and men in the Church**

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> | **Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK), 18th November 2011**

“God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1,27). According to the Gospel women and men are in an equal manner image of God. They are one in Christ. „There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal, 3,28).

In order to live up to this message in a credible way significant steps towards an equitable cooperation between women and men have to be taken in our Church. In their pastoral letter of 1981 „On questions regarding the position of women in church and society”, the German bishops outlined a cooperation in partnership between women and men in the Church. Now, 30 years later, we are still far away from the realisation of this announcement. An equal participation of women in important decision making processes, services and ministries of our Church is still lacking. Only if men and women develop a cooperation in partnership, all different kinds of charism and vocation can achieve their full potential. An unlimited mutual appreciation is needed. Women and men depend on each other: in the way in which they practice pastoral care, how they celebrate liturgy, speak of God, proclaim his message and assume responsibility. We need in our Church free spaces to unfold diverse forms of charism to express effectively the great diversity on all levels and to fill many people with enthusiasm for the message of Jesus.

Therefore, we as Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK) are searching for dialogue – which is to us the basis for comprehension and changes. We want to integrate this vision of cooperation in partnership of women and men, but also of clergymen and lay people, in the process of dialogue launched by the German bishops.

It is our aim

- to make use of all possibilities of involvement for women in the Church that exist already today;
- to change mentalities and structures that are opposed to a consistent cooperation in partnership between women and men as well as between lay people and clergy;
- to start activities in our own surroundings.

Common priesthood of all the faithful

The following statements are all based on the texts of the II Vatican Council. The common priesthood of all the faithful is the fundamental tenet of our belief and understanding. Through baptism and confirmation we as women and men are qualified and called to accomplish God's mission and to act in his world.

Changes within society challenge us Christians (male and female) to examine always anew how to be a compassionate Church. In reviewing further development of ministries and functions and their respective ways of realisation women and men are both equally able to respond from their rich and manifold treasure of competence and charism, and their own experience of life.

Therefore in view of the admission of women and men to services and ministries of the common priesthood, we as ZdK request the implementation of all what is legally possible and expect a higher percentage of women in those fields where they are underrepresented.

Responsibility in the parishes and chances of assignment

One of the most important living space for believers is the local parish. However, in more and more bigger pastoral care units it becomes even more difficult to celebrate the Eucharist in common, to care for individual parish members and to live faith together. Due to this difficult situation the responsible leaders are confronting enormous challenges.

The trustful cooperation between common priesthood and ministerial priesthood – which offers room to the grown diversity of ways of participation – can be an important key to responsibility in partnership for our parish life.

We request that those responsible for decisions in the dioceses promote models of cooperative leadership in local pastoral care. A particular chance should be given to the assignment of employed and voluntary collaborators for specific ministries and services. Women and men should have equal possibilities of participation.

Women in leading positions in the Church

A cooperation in partnership arises when it is realised and experienced at all levels. In the Church fields of actions comprise the work of employed and voluntary people.

Though in some dioceses women are employed in leading positions and sensitivity for such a participation has increased, the percentage of women is still very small.

The common practice, namely of filling service and ministry positions which do not imply the sacrament of ordination exclusively with priests, has to be revised. The Church needs a transparent and sustainable human resources policy for fulltime and voluntary services and functions that allows women a just share in leading positions. It will be necessary to introduce in all dioceses binding prescriptions of equal treatment. What is needed are job models and profiles that are flexible and take account of life courses, admitting also new forms of management for leading positions. If vacancies in leading positions for fulltime and voluntary services have to be filled or newly organised then all the possibilities permitted by Canon Law should be exhausted in order to bear in mind in future lay people and especially women.

As ZdK we request to take account of women and men according to their vocation, qualification, competence, percentage and charism while filling leading positions within the Church. Within the ZdK we provide for an equal participation of women at all levels and see to gender equality in all our bodies as well as at the „Katholikentage“ (Catholic Convention).

Diaconate of women

Our Church understands itself as a Church in service for the world and alongside the poor. To be credible she has to strengthen her profile of charity and diaconia. Charitable work is done in a manifold way by women. The mandate for diaconia given to all Christians, men and women, finds its expression in the sacramental form of the diaconate. Therefore, also women as deaconesses are indispensable.

The theological and practical concept of ministries has developed historically. The current expressions are only a snapshot of our times. As far as the question of ministries is concerned, the Church has always reacted to the challenges of the respective time and the social surroundings, and consequently adapted its own theology of ministries. Against this background the whole treasure of ecclesiastical traditions has to be taken into account. The time has come to ordain women as deaconesses.

To promote this request the ZdK appeals for joining the network „diaconate of women“. We will give publicity to the “day of deaconess“, that is April 29th, the festive day of St. Catherine of Siena, and invite all our members to celebrate this day with us.

The question concerning the ordination of women is not only put forward by individuals and marginal groups or those outside the Church, it comes right from the middle of the Church; the question is asked by women and men. We think it is important to continue the discussion on ministries in our Church and

to keep the theological debate open, to listen to the respective concerns and positions, to understand them and to take them up.

Finance and power of decision

Financial decisions are core toe-holds for the organisation of our Church. Here, too, it is important to work toward a gender based participation at all levels (parish, diocese, national level). In Germany the financial practise of dioceses (and parishes) is manifold. Already the inconsistent working method of financial decision- and administrative structures at the different levels reveals clearly: in some cases women can adhere to these bodies via voting procedures, in others not. Quite often there is insufficient information as to who participates in which decision.

The ZdK asks for more transparency in the management of the financial affairs of the Church at all levels. The ZdK requests also an equal participation of women and men in financial decisions at all levels, and that gender specific implications of these decisions are explicitly taken into account. The ZdK supports women who are getting involved in financial matters, and who are forming networks. The ZdK handles its financial affairs in full transparency, women participate in financial decisions.

Theological research and teaching

Professional female scientists and theologians are contributing in an essential way to progress and new perceptions in the field of theology, but also to the dialogue on gender justice in the Church. This concerns above all the critical reconstruction of traditions with reference to gender relationship and gender roles in Christianity, the participation of women at all levels and in all domains of responsibility of the Church, the conditions of admittance to Church ministries, a spirituality and liturgy based on experience, and the whole complex of ethical questions concerning relationship. Theological research and teaching need the freedom of science. Conflicts concerning the interpretation of ecclesiastical

doctrine should be debated by means of theological arguments without threat of disciplinary measures.

As ZdK we support associations of male and female theologians that contribute to strengthen theology, in particular a theology of women; we are looking for cooperation with these associations for mutual consultation and promotion.

In conclusion we recall the pastoral letter of 1981 "On questions regarding the position of women in church and society", where the German bishops outline in detail the opportunities and challenges of a cooperation in partnership of women and men. They point out important changes in society which led to the „full equality of women and their participation in and co-responsibility for all areas of life“. They value highly the commitment of catholic women and women organisations which contributed a lot to establishing gender equality in society. At the same time they elaborate the challenges for life in the Church: „As women perform today an ever more active function in the whole of life of society it is of great importance that they have an equal share in the different fields of the apostolate of the Church. The point is for the Church, according to the mandate of its founder, to develop more and more into the one and only People of God, where man and women, individually and all together, depending on each person's way, participate in the ministry of prophet, priest and pastor of Jesus Christ.“

Adopted by the ZdK Plenary Assembly on November 18th, 2011.

Erklärungen, Stellungnahmen und Arbeitspapiere des ZdK*

- 24.11.2006 Leben und Sterben in Würde
- 25.11.2006 Das Europäische Sozialmodell – Richtschnur für Reformen
- 04.05.2007 Versprechen einhalten – Armut wirksam bekämpfen!
- 27.08.2007 Ethisches Investment – Mit Geldanlagen Verantwortung übernehmen!
- 23.11.2007 Mut zur Zukunft – Verantwortung des Einzelnen und des Sozialstaates angesichts neuer Risikosituationen
- 29.02.2008 Neue Belastung der christlich-jüdischen Beziehungen – Zur Karfreitagsfürbitte „Für die Juden“ in der Fassung des außerordentlichen Ritus von 2008
- 21.05.2008 Für eine Pastoral der Weite – Ein Gesprächsanstoß
- 21.05.2008 Familienpolitik: geschlechter- und generationengerecht!
- 03.11.2008 Islamischer Religionsunterricht als Chance für Integration und Dialog
- 25.11.2008 Schöpfungsverantwortung wahrnehmen – jetzt handeln!
- 30.11.2008 Das VATER UNSER – ökumenisch
- 09.03.2009 Nein zur Judenmission – Ja zum Dialog zwischen Juden und Christen
- 03.04.2009 Marktwirtschaft – nicht ohne Ethik, nicht ohne Regeln!
- 27.03.2009 Europas Identität – Der Beitrag der christlichen Kultur zu Europas Vielfalt und Einheit
- 08.05.2009 Ohne Wahlen keine Demokratie! – Politische Erklärung aus Anlass der Wahlen zum 17. Deutschen Bundestag am 27. September 2009
- 21.11.2009 Bildung unabhängig von der Herkunft!
- 15.10.2010 Eckpunkte zur Zukunft des Wehrdienstes
- 15.10.2010 Eckpunkte zur Zukunft des Zivildienstes und der Freiwilligendienste
- 19.11.2010 Gesetzliches Verbot der Präimplantationsdiagnostik (PID)
- 08.12.2010 Globalisierung gerecht gestalten – Die Ernährungskrise in den Fokus der Krisenbekämpfung stellen
- 13.05.2011 Kirche bei den Menschen: Verantwortung von Christinnen und Christen angesichts HIV/Aids. Eine Verpflichtung zum Handeln
- 14.05.2011 Um der Menschen willen! – Plädoyer für eine lebensnahe Ökumene
- 18.11.2011 Europa ist unsere Zukunft! Europa nicht von seinen Grenzen, sondern von seinen Chancen her denken
- 18.11.2011 Für ein partnerschaftliches Zusammenwirken von Frauen und Männern in der Kirche
- 16.05.2012 Gemeinsam lernen – Inklusion von Menschen mit Behinderung im Bildungswesen
- 22.06.2012 Eckpunkte für eine nachhaltige europäische Landwirtschaft

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Diese Liste enthält die in Druckform vorliegenden Erklärungen, Stellungnahmen und Arbeitspapiere des ZdK. Weitere Veröffentlichungen des ZdK finden Sie unter <http://www.zdk.de/veroeffentlichungen/erklarungen>

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